

Day Four: Living our vows



We have dedicated our fourth day completely to the reflection on our religious vows of poverty, chastity and obedience. Our approach to the evangelical counsels was made in a different way. Fr. Ngoa invited us to review our recent self-evaluations, especially what we wrote there about each of the vows. We also presented two obstacles in our cultures as we live out the vows… the sharing that came after enriched us a lot…

At the morning mass, Fr. Bernard invited us to make our stand in the midst of the conflict or violence present in our reality. In the first session, we also asked ourselves which one of the vows do we need to live first or to what of the vows we need to be formed first. This was done simply to know where our fragilities lie and what are needs are.

In the morning, we recalled what the Founder has to say about the vows in his Meditations (nos. 21-24). Reading some of our self-evaluation reports and what we said about our practice of the vow of poverty, we also named two cultural obstacles in living poverty. Some of these are secularism, consumerism, false sense of security and even family relations.

In the afternoon, we continued with the presentation of the vows of chastity and obedience. Our sharing was fully enriching and included tips and advices based on personal experience from one another in living the counsels. For example, one of our brother proposed that we pinch our skin, as he does, each time that we have a temptation against the chastity. If this doesn't work he reads the Bible, and if it still doesn't work he reads the Bible and pinches himself at the same time… We are not sure if this tip will really help us to be chaste, but we are sure that the advice our Founder gave us in his Meditations will be useful.

ASIAN ASSUMPTIONISTS' JOINT FORMATION

Fr. d'Alzon's advice on how to live in fidelity to our vows

1. Poverty
- To seek the Kingdom of God and its righteousness.
-To consider this vow as a liberation and not as an obligation: It frees us of worldly commitments, it gives us complete freedom of spirit, it fills us with joy and it helps us to imitate Jesus.
- To learn to possess not to be possessed.
- To be conscious that the desire of money could lead us to unjust practices.

2. Chastity
- Blessed are the pure of heart because they will see God.
- To consider this vow as a privilege more than a loss.
- To remember that we are not only bodies but also spirits.
- To have an aptitude of vigilance (prudence).
- To keep a certain distance between ourselves and the danger.
- To pray: Devotion to Mary and devotion to our Lord Jesus Christ.
- To fast: Three elements: To fast of (abstinence), to fast for (motivation) and to fast with (community support)

3. Obedience
- To be like Jesus Christ obedient unto death and death on a cross.
- Without communication, it is impossible to have obedience.
- This is an exercise of perfection.
- Four steps: Instruction, orientation, commandment and correction.

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